(b) if so, the reasons for shortfall in earnings; and

(c) the steps taken to bring stability in shipping industry?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, the shipping industry is cyclical in nature. Its revenue and profitability depends on prevailing freight rate at a particular point of time.

(c) The Government has been taking various steps from time to time for development and stabilization of the Shipping industry in order to provide level playing field to compete in the International market. Some of them are listed as under:

- Import of all types of ships have been included in the Open General Licence (OGL);
- Ships (including second hand ships) can be imported freely now without license as per guidelines issued by the Ministry of Shipping on 15th June, 2001 and 5th March, 2002;
- 100 percent Foreign Direct Investment is allowed in Shipping sector;
- The proposed Custom duty of 5% on import of Ships in the Finance bill for 2001-2002, has been done away with.
- Enhancement of Depreciation rate from 20% to 25% for Ships.
- Section 33AC of IT Act has been made more attractive for Indian Shipping companies. The limit upto which reserves could be built up by the shipping companies for new acquisition will now include general reserves and share premium reserves also. Earlier it was limited to twice the paid up capital of the shipping companies.

Pilot project for welfare of disabled in A.P. and Karnataka

2575. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed a pilot project in

Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka States for the welfare of disabled in association with the Rehabilitation Council of India;

(b) if so, whether both the States have agreed to implement the project; and

.(c) by when this project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

People's empowerment schemes in Jammu and Kashmir

2576. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any People's Empowerment Schemes have been introduced in Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the name of the schemes which would cover the Kashmir Valley?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) and (b) There are schemes being implemented for the welfare of the Schedule castes, Backward castes, the Minorities and the disabled in all the states in the country. These schemes are also being implemented in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The empowerment of the people takes place through these schemes.

There is no specific scheme for empowerment of people introduced specially in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Inclusion of new castes in the list of backward classes of the country

†2577. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that there is a need of making list of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.